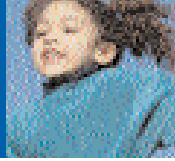
The Facts About Children's Health



Asthma An estimated 6.3 million children (8.7 %) under 18 year of age had asthma in 2001.[1]

Hospitalizations for asthma increased from 21 per 10,000 children in 1980 to 29 per 10,000 children in 1999.[2]

In 1999, asthma was the fourth ranking cause of non-injury-related hospitalization among children less than 15 years of age.[3]

In 2000, 233 children under 18 years of age died from asthma.[4] The number of children ages 1-14 dying from asthma increased 180 % from 1979 to 1998.[5]

Asthma disproportionately affects children from lower-income families and children from different racial and ethnic groups.[6]

Asthma is the most common chronic childhood disease in the United States.[7]

Economic Impact of Asthma In 1994-1996, children with asthma missed approximately 14 million school days a year.[8]

The direct and indirect costs of asthma to the U.S. economy were estimated at $14 billion in 2002.[9]

- About 1/3 of the costs are associated with children's asthma.[10]
- School absenteeism costs over $1.5 billion each year in lost productivity.[11]

Asthmatic patients and their families pay a higher portion of their medical care costs than patients with other diseases because of heavy reliance on prescription medication combined with lower insurance coverage for prescription drugs.

- They pay about 25 % of the cost themselves compared to 10 % for other general medical care costs.[12]

Lead Poisoning About 430,000 American children (approximately 2 percent) ages 1-5 had elevated levels of lead in their blood (that is, levels at or greater than 10 ug/dL) in 1999-2000. That number of lead poisoned children declined significantly from 4.7 million in 1978.[13]

Childhood lead poisoning reduces IQ, which can never be regained[14].

The decline in blood lead levels is due largely to the phasing out of lead in gasoline between 1973 and 1995[15] and to the reduction in the number of homes with lead-based paint from 64 million in 1990 to 38 million in 2000.[16]

Today, elevated blood lead levels are due mostly to the ingestion of contaminated dust, paint, and soil.[17]

Blood lead levels are higher for children ages 1-5 from lower-income families and for certain racial and ethnic groups.[18]

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[1] EPA, America's Children and the Environment, Second Edition, 2003, pp. 68-69. See http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/publications.htm.

[2] Ibid, p. 75.

[3] Ibid.

[4] CDC, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/asthma/asthma.htm.

[5] American Lung Association, Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality, March 2003, Table 4. See http://www2.lungusa.org/data/asthma/ASTHMAdt.pdf.

[6] EPA, America's Children and the Environment, p. 70-71.

[7] Ibid, p. 68.

[8] Ibid, p. 67.

[9] NIH, http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/resources/docs/02_chtbk.pdf.

[10] EPA, National Costs of Asthma for 1997, pp. 21-22.

[11] American Lung Association, Table 17.

[12] EPA, National Costs of Asthma for 1997, p. 24.

[13] EPA, America's Children and the Environment, Second Edition, 2003, p. 53. See http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/publications.htm.

[14] ATSDR, Case Studies in Environmental Medicine, Lead Toxicity, revised September 1992. See http://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/prevguid/p0000017/p0000017.asp.

[15] EPA, National Air Quality and Emissions Trends Report, 1998 (2000), p. 78. See http://www.epa.gov/oar/aqtrnd98/toc.html

[16] D. Jacobs, R. Clickner, J. Zhou, S. Viet, D. Marker, J. Rogers, D. Zeldin, P. Broene, and W. Friedmanm, 2002, The Prevalence of Lead-based Paint Hazards in U.S. Housing, *Environmental Health Perspectives* 110(10): 599-606 (2002).

[17] CDC, Screening Young Children for Lead Poisoning: Guidance for State and Local Public Health Officials, 1997. See http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/guide/guide97.htm.

[18] EPA, America's Children and the Environment, p. 55.

Economic Impact of Lead Poisoning Reduced cognitive ability, as measured by IQ scores and valued in terms of forgone earnings, is estimated to be about $9,600 per IQ point lost.[19]

The cost of not eliminating lead exposure to children between 2000-2010 is expected to be about $22 billion in forgone earnings.[20]

Childhood Cancer

In 1998, approximately 12,400 children younger than 20 years of age were diagnosed with cancer and 2,500 died.[21]

Cancer is the leading cause of death by disease among children between 1 and 19 years of age in the United States. It is the third most common overall cause of death, preceded only by intentional injuries and accidents.[22]

Leukemia was the most common cancer diagnosis for children under age 20 from 1975-1995, followed by central nervous system tumors, and lymphomas.[23]

The causes of childhood cancer are poorly understood, though in general it is thought that different forms of cancer have different causes.[24]

Economic Impact of Childhood Cancer The total cost per case of childhood cancer is estimated to be approximately $623,000 (in 1998 dollars).[25]

The estimated annualized cost of cancer for children under 15 years of age is $4.8 billion (in 1998 dollars).[26]

Developmental Disorders

Approximately 12 million children (17 percent) under age 18 suffer from one or more developmental disabilities, which include physical, cognitive, psychological, sensory, and speech impairments.[27]

In 1997-2000 about 0.6 percent of children were reported to be diagnosed with mental retardation.[28]

Between 3 and 8 percent of the babies born each year will be affected by developmental disorders such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or mental retardation.[29]

Mental retardation is more common for children from lower-income families and for certain racial and ethnic groups.[30]

The causes of developmental disorders are generally unknown.[31]

Economic Impact of Developmental Disorders State and federal education departments spend about $36 billion each year on special education programs for individuals with developmental disabilities who are 3-21 years of age.[32]

Although it is hard to estimate the costs of caring for children with more serious forms of mental retardation, the costs may be as much as 10 times higher than caring for a child who does not have a disability.[33]

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[19] President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children, Eliminating Childhood Lead Poisoning: A Federal Strategy Targeting Lead Paint Hazards, February 2000, p. A-26. See http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/leadhaz.htm/$file/leadhaz.pdf.

[20] Ibid, p. A-28.

[21] L. Reis, M. Smith, J. Gurney, M. Linet, T. Tamra, J. Young, and G. Bunin, Cancer Incidence and Survival among Children and Adolescents: United States SEER Program 1975-1995, National Cancer Institute, NIH Pub. No. 99-4649, 1999, p. 1. See http://seer.cancer.gov/publications/childhood/introduction.pdf.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid, p. 2.

[24] EPA, America's Children and the Environment, Second Edition, 2003, p. 76. See http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/publications.htm.

[25] P. Landrigan, C. Schechter, J. Lipton, M. Fahs, and J. Schwartz, Environmental Pollutants and Disease in American Children: Estimates of Morbidity, Mortality, and Costs for Lead Poisonings, Asthma, Cancer, and Developmental Disabilities, *Environmental Health Perspectives* 110(7): 771-8 (2002).

[26] Ibid.

[27] CDC, http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd.

[28] EPA, America's Children and the Environment, Second Edition, 2003, p. 53. See http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/publications.htm.

[29] B. Weiss and P. Landrigan, The Developing Brain and the Environment: An Introduction, *Environmental Health Perspectives* 108 (Suppl.3): 373-4 (2000).

[30] EPA, America's Children and the Environment, p. 85.

[31] CDC, http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd.

[32] Ibid.

[33] CDC, http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd/ddmr.htm.